





Dear young researchers,

welcome to our Nuremberg Forum and congratulation that you have qualified to participate in the Young Researchers' Workshop!

For me personally it has always been an inspiring and stimulating experience to share ideas and questions of my own research with colleagues from other countries and cultures. I wish for you that you will make similar experiences. I trust that you will benefit from the mutual exchange as well as from the individual coaching by those advanced researchers who will serve as your academic godfathers during the conference. The topic of public theology with its international relevance and global network is the ideal framework for fruitful cross-cultural discussions.

All the best for your further academic career and, for now, have an enjoyable stay at Nuremberg!

Professor Manfred L. Pirner, Convenor



Young Researchers' Workshop on the 12th International  
Nuremberg Forum 2016

Monday, 03.10.2016, 09:00 - 18:00 Uhr



	<b>Group 1</b>		<b>Group 2</b>
<b>Workshop Moderation</b>	Dr. Florian Höhne		Dr. Susanne Schwarz
<b>Professors</b>	Prof. Bai, Prof. Smit		Prof. Pirner, Prof. Lähnemann
<b>Timetable</b>	<b>Presenters</b>		<b>Presenters</b>
9:00-9:30	Introduction		
9:45-10:30	Dave Chang		Dr. Ulrich Kumher
10:45-11:30	Tina Bellman		Ayse Calal
Coffee Break			
12:00-12:45	Torben Stamer		Elif Medeni
13:00-13:45	Dr. Henco van Westhuizen		Dr. Lucas Graßal
Lunch			
15.15-16:00	Nadia Marais		Dr. Kathrin Kürzinger
16:15-17:00	Helgard Pretorius		Callid Keefe-Perry
Coffee Break			
17:30-18:15			Astrid Marhoff
18:15 - Open end: Get together im "Landbierparadies" (optional)			

## Dr. Nadia Marais

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### **A theological appraisal of the 'T'-word:**

#### **Russel Botman, Stellenbosch University, and the rhetoric of transformation**

The last couple of months at Stellenbosch University have been a fruitful albeit challenging time. In this time we saw the formation of Open Stellenbosch, a diverse group of students and staff that has repeatedly called on the university to address transformation in concrete ways, and who has focused specifically in this regard on the lack of black professors and Afrikaans as a language of tuition. This has also been taken up within the Faculty of Theology, where a recently formed group that calls itself the Black Theologians' Collective has critiqued the faculty for being slow to transform in a manner that satisfies black students.

Much more can be said about the lively and crucial discussions on transformation that is taking place on campus at the moment. And of course students' protests at the discrimination and prejudices that they experience while at university are not only taking place at Stellenbosch University, but at a number of South African tertiary institutions – including the University of Cape Town (Rhodes Must Fall), the University of the Witwatersrand (Transform Wits) and Rhodes University (the Black Students Movement). What all of this raises is the different expectations and meanings attached to the word that stands at the heart of all of these movements, namely 'transformation'. The ambit of meaning that surrounds 'transformation' has become a contested space, and the very debates and struggles to make sense of this word has led someone like the (South) African public theologian Russel Botman to reflect very seriously on a theology of transformation.

Not only would Russel Botman himself be the first black rector of Stellenbosch University, but he would also play a fundamental role in placing the university within a trajectory of transformation in higher education in South Africa – through a number of (practical) institutional initiatives within Stellenbosch University (such as establishing the Centre for Transdisciplinarity, Sustainability, Assessment, Modelling, and Analysis (2011a:6), the Frederik van Zyl Slabbert Institute for Student Leadership Development (2011a:6 – 7), and the Centre for Inclusivity), but especially in opting for a 'pedagogy of hope' in his inaugural address as rector and vice-chancellor (Botman, 2007). This would inform and come to describe his particular focus and

legacy within Stellenbosch University, most notably through his positioning of the university in service of the South African and African public(s) – better known and understood by way of ‘the Hope Project’, a set of strategic foci based on the UN Millenium Development Goals (cf. Botman, 2011a; 2011b; 2012).

It is, however, particularly as a theologian – moreover, as a theologian deeply influenced by Dietrich Bonhoeffer (cf. for example Botman, 1993; 1996; 2000a; and 2000b) – that he would shape the many conversations on transformation, also on campus, right up to his death two years ago. Theology, argues Botman (1993:233 – 234), should play a central role in the transformation of society, particularly in South Africa. As such, a theology of transformation is required to partner with “a broader community in the process of transformation” (Botman, 1993:234). This includes taking up the task of working out a theology of transformation.

A theology of transformation “takes its point of departure in the belief that people can come to understanding the process of transformation” through ‘learning’ and ‘conscientising’ (1993:234). The transformation that Botman has in mind is ‘social (or public) transformation’, or “the reconstruction of a new society free from division and domination” (2000a:201). This is, for Botman (2000a:202), the exact opposite to the ‘maintenance’ of the status quo (whether in churches or in society), and not to be confused with ‘change’ (1996:3). Rather, transformation is used by Botman “as a technical term... [that] represents the organic struggle with continuities and discontinuities prevalent in the new kairos in South Africa” (1996:3).

This paper aims to provide a theological appraisal of the rhetoric of transformation, particularly from the work of Russel Botman and particularly within the higher education context of Stellenbosch University. It will be argued that public theologians like Botman, who played a leading role in the strategic positioning of this South African university, may contribute in important ways to current debates surrounding (the meaning and implications of) transformation – exactly as theologians, and exactly insofar as their theological convictions are sensibly translated into the public of higher education.

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### Reinhold Niebuhr's Public Theology and the Socio-Ethical Resources of Modern Christianity

I would like to start with the bold claim that there should not be a conference on “public theology” without taking into account the theologian for whom this phrase was coined. In the 1970s, the historian of religion Martin E. Marty first used the term in his essay “Reinhold Niebuhr: Public Theology and the American Experience” in order to describe a particularly U.S.-American phenomenon and an approach of theology that was not only directed to the church but to the whole public. For Marty, two intellectual streams – the churches’ and the “political” – which tried to make sense of the American religious experience came together in Niebuhr’s work. Reinhold Niebuhr is generally known as the most influential American theologian of the 20<sup>th</sup> century who made a comeback in the Anglo-Saxon world beginning in the early 2000s, interestingly less so in theological circles but rather within the field of political science. However, he is hardly remembered in the land of his forefathers, that being Germany. Only recently has an anthology started to rediscover his persona and work as an example for what “public theology” can look like. Following this lead, my conference paper will ask why Niebuhr advocated for his specific theological enterprise and how he pursued his task, therefore, outlining the profile of his type of “public theology”. Finally, I will draw conclusions for the impulses we can take away from him for our task today.

Niebuhr’s public theology involves three characteristics: Firstly, a critical diagnosis of modernity and modern religion, leading to a call for reorientation and reformation of Protestant Christianity. Secondly, this reformation centers in a reformulation of theological anthropology, which – thirdly – becomes the vehical and means for a fruitful impact of religion on the public and political sphere, particularly in the field of social ethics.

Niebuhr diagnoses a crisis of modern society which is not being addressed thoroughly by the churches and therefore leads to a crisis of religion. Historical events form the empirical basis for his observations: the social injustices in an industrial city like Detroit, where he serves as a pastor, the hardships endured in Europe following World War I, including increasingly strong fascist tendencies in various countries. In addition, Niebuhr encounters the effects of the Great Depression at first hand as a professor in New York City, one of the epicenters of the economic crisis. These experiences correlate with Niebuhr’s growing frustration over what he perceives as “privatized” churches, focusing too much on personal

morality and metaphysical questions, and their incompetence to deal with systemic injustices. Hence, his public theology begins with an interpretation of the challenges of modern society as challenges to religion. For him, theology needs to inquire into the underlying causes of societal problems. This leads us to the question of how he formulates his “public theology”.

Niebuhr views religion’s deficits as grounded in the unqualified optimism and illusions of “liberal” theology, leading back to a flawed anthropology. Niebuhr contests this with a renewed appreciation for traditional Christian symbols, such as “original sin”, and the acknowledgment of the basic importance of power and egoism in all social relationships, particularly in group behavior. It leaves him with the recognition of the paradoxes and tragedies of human life, giving him a realistic understanding of religious institutions as well. Therefore, everything involving human beings, even religion, is an ambivalent entity. Before Christian religion can reach out into modern public life, it needs to review itself critically, recognizing the dual possibilities inherent in its own life. Religion can have healing social influences because of its transcendent ideal which provides a critical vantage point that questions every historical achievement. It can thus become a motor for continuing improvement. At the same time, religion can also impede the moral struggle for justice and become socially conservative in an undue emphasis on the assurance of grace, if justification and sanctification are separated and if it becomes too intimately involved with any given structure. On the basis of a reappropriation of its realistic theological anthropology, Niebuhr believes, religion can make the most fundamental contribution to the regeneration of modernity. It can help see all the facts realistically, not overestimating human beings and at the same time not underestimating their potentialities.

Niebuhr rightly points to the indissoluble connection of anthropology and ethics which leads to the third basic characteristic of his “public theology”: It has immediate effects on the social sphere because, firstly, it provides a basis for Christians who are active in the world. Secondly, a realistic view of society will promote mutually beneficent social policies and defend democratic and open societies not because it trusts in the best, but because it knows about the worst in humanity. This “pessimistic optimism” or “Christian realism” can be made plausible to the non-Christian world negatively, Niebuhr believes, since all the other alternatives can be proven as deficient. There is a claim here for the superiority of a Christian (especially Protestant) perspective, but one that can lay a sound basis for tolerance and democratic institutions for all. Between a realistic anthropology and the religious ideal, there is room for a democratic debate about the means for achieving the social good.

This sketch of Niebuhr’s thought leads us to the final question of what we can take away from all of this. I would like to make four points:

1) When discussing “public theology”, we are reminded that it is a relatively new catchphrase referring to the age old question of the relationship between religion and society. At the same time, we need to be specific and outline our aims clearly, since the term is used so widely and diffusely.

2) Let us play the *advocatus diaboli* here and posit two possible criticisms of our own discussion of “public theology”: Firstly, we could question if a “public theology” is a solely positive enterprise. We do not need to go as far as religious terrorism, but we need only think of reactionary religious-political alliances. Secondly, we could wonder if “public theology” does not serve the purpose of saving some portion of



relevance and influence, maybe even hegemony, for Christian religion in an increasingly secular atmosphere. Personally, I do not want to renounce the objectives of the conference or similar undertakings, but keeping these criticisms in mind should help us in sharpening our positions and facing justified criticisms. Niebuhr reminds us of the ambivalence of religion, and we can qualify our enthusiasm by critically engaging all the facts.

3) Niebuhr might have pointed us into the direction of what religious education, not just in schools but everywhere in religious institutions, could look like. It could be inspired by Niebuhr to remember the fundamental connection of anthropological thought and ethical action, and the importance of our beliefs. It would help us to evaluate everyone's motives critically and at the same time struggle for social justice, aligning ourselves with the weak. Might this indirect way of shaping the public not be most appropriate for modern "public theology"?

4) Last but not least, we will be reminded of the Christian coloring of "public theology" in this context and that it does not necessarily go hand in hand with advocating radical pluralism. Niebuhr was convinced of the superiority of his Christian perspective, though he later qualified it. By reading Niebuhr, at least in this sense, we might be reminded that we also need to go beyond Niebuhr today.

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### Scripture in Applied Ethics

#### A Perspective from Argumentation Theory and Hermeneutics on the German Discourse

As a society, we ask how we shall act in different social contexts. Public theologians take part in the common discourse to answer this question by interpreting the bible in regard to its public relevance.<sup>1</sup> Thereby, Scripture is usually seen as normative in protestant theology.<sup>2</sup> However, the use of Scripture in applied ethics can be quite heterogeneous as the following two examples demonstrate:

“The Christian understanding of participation is anchored in a person’s sharing in the divine reality, which is received as a gift from God. The Bible emphasises inalienable human dignity and illustrates the conviction that each individual has been provided with the ability to participate actively, using symbolism such as that of the body of Christ (e.g. 1 Cor 12).”<sup>3</sup>

“Human beings are made in the image of God (Gen 1:26ff ). From this likeness they are called to help work on the forming of creation. The goal of this calling can be inferred from the mandate ‘to till and keep’ the earth (Gen 2:15).”<sup>4</sup>

These quotes taken from my own German context show the plurality of ways to use Scripture. These are not easy to systematize. In my dissertation, the use of Scripture

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. Höhne, Florian, *Öffentliche Theologie. Begriffsgeschichte und Grundfragen* (ÖTh 31), Leipzig 2015, 39f.

<sup>2</sup> This is part of the reformatory impact, cf. for an early formulation: „...bleibt allein die heilige Schrift der einige Richter, Regel und Richtschnur, nach welcher als dem einigen Probiertstuhl sollen und müssen alle Leren erkant und geurteilt werden, ob sie gut oder böß, recht oder unrecht sein.“ (BSELK 1218,13–16)

<sup>3</sup> EKD Church Office, *Just Participation. Empowerment for Personal Responsibility and Solidarity. A Memorandum of the Council of the Evangelical Church in Germany on Poverty in Germany*, 2006, available at: [http://www.ekd.de/english/download/gerechte\\_teilhabe\\_englisch.pdf](http://www.ekd.de/english/download/gerechte_teilhabe_englisch.pdf) (15.09.2016), 3.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, 25.

will be analyzed concerning the hermeneutical and argumentative strategy of the biblical use, the pragmatic intention, the relation of the bible to other ethical criteria like reason, and exegetical work. In the novel approach I am suggesting, I plan to uncover the hidden argumentative strategies of the use of the bible in applied ethics for exemplary cases and compare them. Argumentation theory<sup>5</sup> can bring a net of plausibilities (“Netz von Plausibilitäten”<sup>6</sup>) to the fore. Especially for public theologians, a better understanding of the potential strategies to use the bible and their particular (dis-)advantages is helpful for arguing in different contexts. This also implies new possibilities for education.

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<sup>5</sup> Cf. van Eemeren, Frans H. et al., *Handbook of Argumentation Theory*, Dordrecht 2014.

<sup>6</sup> Gerber, Chrstine, *Ein Bild des Judentums für Nichtjuden von Flavius Josephus. Untersuchungen zu seiner Schrift Contra Apionem (AGJU 40)*, Leiden 1997, 129.

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### “Enduring foreignness and unfamiliarity”? – On theological hermeneutics for strangers

*... we have become strangers to one another, with the result that, indeed, we do live in different worlds (Dirkie Smit).*

1. For a very long time South Africans have been separated from one another in every conceivable way. The most serious, most disconcerting and the most challenging dimension of the situation in South Africa, it has been said, might still be described as its separateness. Due to numerous divisive measures over many years, people and groups of people came to differ from one another, became estranged in a variety of ways. For so many reasons South Africans are in fact *strangers* to one another.

2. The South African systematic theologian, Dirkie Smit, has been particularly interested in the many and very complex challenges emanating from this situation. For him it was and still is important to ask: What makes understanding difficult and how does it happen that we talk past one another? Why do we often think that we do understand one another, when the reality tells a different story?

Perhaps a thread that runs through his work might be described as a search for a grammar, a frame of reference for discussion, for life together, in the broadest sense of the word. In different ways, from the most diverse viewpoints, he has in a certain sense continually asked how a frame of reference might enrich and refine discussion for life together. To frame the question differently, how a *hermeneutic of strangers* might enrich and refine these discussions.

3. It is interesting that Theo Sundermeier, the German missiologist, who have spent a lot of time in South Africa, has also been particularly interested in these themes. He has written extensively on the important theme of living together and difference, *Konvivenz und Differenz* (1995), the title of the *estschrift* written at the occasion of his sixtieth birthday. He has through the years had a notable interest in understanding strangers and those who have found themselves to be estranged, as is clear in his practical hermeneutic, *Den Fremden verstehen* (1996).

4. The German systematic theologian, Michael Welker, who are also familiar with the situation and challenges of South Africa, and who for years had his office opposite Sundermeier at the University of Heidelberg, has also been interested in these themes. In fact, the title of the proposed essay comes from his theology of the Spirit, *God the Spirit*, that functions as the basis for the rest of his theological endeavour, e.g. his more recent *God the Revealed: Christology*.

In his realistic and *public* theology of the Spirit, he argues that the work of the Spirit is not fully incomprehensible and numinous, but become clearer as the biblical traditions unfolds. Although the early testimonies to the Spirit are unclear, the Spirit gains contours e.g. as the Spirit of Christ.

It is the Spirit of Christ that is poured out on the most diverse, disintegrated and dispersed people and groups of people. With the outpouring of the Spirit he sees a ruptured world beginning to grow together. The result of the pouring out of the Spirit is a community where differences are not set aside, but retained (230). For him, the miracle of the outpouring lies precisely not in what is difficult to understand or incomprehensible, but in a totally unexpected comprehensibility and in an unbelievable, universal capacity to understand (231). Without setting aside their forms of expression and understanding as these forms are marked off in relation to other forms, an unbelievable commonality of experience and of understanding occurs. It is for him precisely this difference between the experience of plural inaccessibility to each other and of enduring foreignness, and unfamiliarity, and of utter commonality of the capacity to understand that makes the outpouring of the Spirit truly spectacular (233).

The Spirit in this manner forms a community that can be characterised by the intentions of the law. The intentions of the law are concerned with a heightened sensitivity to differences, constantly differentiating creative differences that are constitutive for community from differences that halter and disintegrate community. He understands these intentions, the weightiest and most important aspects of this law, to be the establishment of justice, mercy and *knowledge* of God. These elements of the law are to be found with differing emphases in all biblical law texts, and are to be expected with a degree of certainty. The legal code of the law, taking as its point of departure a community of equal persons, is concerned with the regulating of conflict and the restoration of equality following conflict. The mercy code of the law, assuming the coexistence and participation of equal and unequal persons, seeks constantly anew the routinized protection of the marginalised and the safeguarding of their concerns. He sees the cultic code of the law as the critical source and framework of this justice and mercy. It has to do with the cult, the regulated, *public* and relatively accessible relation to God.

5. In a recent essay Smit, in the light of the complexity of the discursive practices in South African society today, indicated that it is not easy to provide theological responses to questions regarding the contribution of religions to the common good in South Africa today. Any possible attempt to contribute, he said, should therefore be very modest, humble and careful.

The following essay attempts to argue modestly, humbly and carefully that a public theology of the Spirit can contribute towards a more differentiated theological hermeneutic for strangers, from which societies confronted with people and groups of people challenged with enduring foreignness and unfamiliarity, might benefit.

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## Life Off-Grid: Contemplative Solitude as Ecological Praxis

### Background

Many religious traditions throughout history have fostered contemplative communities devoted to supplication and meditation. Christian monasticism traces back to the 2<sup>nd</sup> century with the desert fathers of Egypt, who gave rise to a monastic tradition that would greatly influence the cultural path of Europe in the next millennium. In the East, Hindu, Buddhist, Jain and Taoist traditions all feature contemplative segments, with dedicated monastic communities supported by lay patrons. A more austere form of contemplative life can be found in the eremitic tradition, where monks and nuns commit to periods of solitude (ranging from several months to years, even decades in some cases) to immerse themselves in religious devotion.

As purveyors of knowledge, keepers of religious wisdom, and sanctioned educational institutions, contemplative traditions wielded decisive influence on the culture and politics of their societies for the better part of a millennium. However, the developments of modernity seem to have diminished the influence of contemplative communities within secular polities. Is the contemplative life still relevant to the world today? Can contemplation offer credible and viable solutions to the world struggling to cope with complex challenges such as economic inequality and ecological deterioration?

My doctoral work examines solitary, contemplative retreat as a form of active resistance against the prevailing establishment, political and economic. More specifically, I wish to investigate how a contemplative retreat off the electricity grid counters capitalist social/economic impulses by authoring an intentional and ecologically-harmonious way of life. My study will proceed from the following questions:

- a) How does solitude challenge the prevailing social habitus (Bourdieu, 1990)?
- b) What possibilities for social and ecological justice are opened through a life of self-sufficiency in remote wilderness?
- c) In what ways can contemplative retreat serve as an educative medium and a developmental process?

## Practical Design

My doctoral project will involve my:

- Living in solitude, on an off-grid island for a period of 6 months to a year.
- Attempting to live in relative self-sufficiency (growing food and generating power).
- Devoting time to contemplative practice (in my case, Zen Buddhist meditation).

I have begun to make connections with researchers regarding off-grid communities along the coast of British Columbia. The following timeline adumbrates the shape of my project in the next three years:

Summer/Fall 2016: Visit off-grid islands on the B.C. Coast. Consult local communities about access to land. Connect with local researchers with similar interests.

Spring 2017: Live in an off-grid community for a period of one to two months. Learn practical and agricultural skills. Finalize place of retreat. Consult with local communities about supplies and provisions. Consult with contemplative religious orders about the nature of solitary retreat. Begin preparing for retreat.

Summer/Fall 2017: Begin retreat. Duration of retreat will be decided in consultation with Local communities and my thesis committee supervisors.

Summer/Fall 2018: Data analysis; Write Dissertation

Spring 2019: Defend Dissertation

## Theoretical Perspectives

1. *Solitude as a condition of cultural change*. Because we are acculturated to a social milieu that determines much of our activism  $\frac{3}{4}$  our efforts to change culture is shaped by culture itself. Radical change may require solitude, a removal from social concourse that offers experiences beyond one's social-cultural habitus and the familiarity afforded by a prevailing world-view (Bourdieu, 1990; Foucault, 1990).
2. *Non-participation as social resistance*  $\frac{3}{4}$  If the current capitalist/industrial system largely runs on social and ecological exploitation, then one might protest its rule by extricating oneself from the economic apparatus, by refusing to participate in its business, and thus depriving it of momentum (Merton, 1998; Merton & Cunningham, 1992).
3. *Contemplation as human flourishing*  $\frac{3}{4}$  With affinity to the Greek philosophy, the contemplative life might be construed as one lived in pursuit of the good and the beautiful (Aristotle, 1999; Epicurius, 1964; Plato, 1951). The return to this eudaimonic vision of life is an attempt to recover the sacred from the profane, numinosity from a world of commodity. As a student of the Soto Zen tradition, I will be practicing *shikantaza*, a form of Buddhist meditation that cultivates a clear and deep awareness of the nature of mind.

## Method and Data

The project will be a heuristic study, an analysis of my own experience as a solitary contemplative. Daily journal entries, photos, poems and reflections will supply the documentation of my experience, the significance of which will be examined through philosophical analysis in relation to the guiding questions of the project. Examination

and analysis will be aided by relevant literature on the sustainable living and contemplative retreat.

### **Implications for Theory and Practice**

My project challenges fundamental assumptions around the relationship between the individual and society. Thomas Merton has written extensively on the solitary life as a form of resistance against exploitative social structures (Merton, 1998, 1999). For Merton, solitude is not a renunciation of the world, but rather a deeper engagement with the world through a commitment to authenticity. However, writing primarily before the environmental movement, Merton directed his efforts toward the social rather than the ecological dimensions of contemplative solitude. Deep ecology, a school of philosophy that addresses the root causes of the ecological crisis, enjoins efforts to establish an eco-centric worldview, one of the avenues of which may include religious and contemplative practice (Devall & Sessions, 2000; Leopold, 1986; Naess, 1995, 2008; Snyder, 1981). Thus, My study examines how conscientious re-inhabitation helps to heal ecological wounds. On the educational side, much work has been done on the topic of social and ecological justice (Bowers, 1997; Freire, 2000; Greenwood, 2003; Orr, 2004; Smith & Sobel, 2010). However, many educational theories re-inscribe liberal and progressive assumptions which are the impetus behind much social and ecological exploitation (Bowers, 1997, 2000). By implementing a praxis outside the circumscribed norms of the existing educational establishment, I hope to better identify the habitus, the socialized imperatives and unconscious aims, of many eco/social justice programs and the ways they perpetuate the ecological crisis.

### **Researcher Bio:**

David Chang is a doctoral student in the Faculty of Education at Simon Fraser University (SFU), currently completing his second year of studies. David has taught secondary English and has also worked as a teacher educator in the Professional Development Program at SFU.

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### **Anatheism: apology or pedagogy?**

With the publication of *Anatheism: Returning to God after God* the respected Irish philosopher, Richard Kearney, supplemented his already impressive set of writings on the question of faith and religion with another creative contribution to the current debate in continental philosophy of religion. On this occasion Kearney specifically addresses the contentious issues related to a “return of the religious” in contemporary world politics and the so-called “turn to religion” in Continental philosophy. His book could be seen as a call for increased hermeneutical engagement and vigilance, rather than a retreat into reductive secularism or an uncritical embrace of the return of the gods.

Setting forth the spirit of his mentor, Paul Ricoeur, Kearney frames anatheism as an existential and epistemological wager that involves both risk and promise, a wager that can hardly be avoided in the face of ever increasing hostility towards the Other – in both its fanatical and democratic-liberal forms. As the prefix “ana-” suggests, Kearney (2010: 7) envisions a “return” to an “inaugural instant of reckoning at the root of belief” that re-considers “the option of retrieved belief.” Kearney recognises a “primordial wager” at the heart of the great religious traditions that involves an encounter with the sacred stranger and a subsequent call for discernment about whether to respond with hostility or hospitality. In his typically imaginative and narrative style, Kearney draws on Biblical stories from the three Abrahamic faiths (Judaism, Christianity and Islam) to make his argument and supplements these with in-depth systematic discussions of philosophical and ethical issues, drawing on fields as diverse as theology, literature and political theory.

Because of the tone that public debates on faith and religion typically adopt, *Anatheism* may understandably be typecast as another contribution to the apologetics genre. However, while Kearney certainly makes an important apologetic contribution, I would like to argue that this may blind us to an important pedagogical appeal that anatheism makes to proponents of particular faith traditions. By departing from the premise that anatheism addresses practitioners of religion themselves and not just its antagonists, the anatheist wager may also be viewed as a moment of metanoia, as a call to return to God after God; that is, after claiming to love God, to know God, to side with God. In this sense, the anatheist wager poses a welcome challenge to believers wherever epistemological positivism or self-righteous pietism rears its head; for as anyone living in the early twenty-first century should know, siding with God all too quickly leads to the conviction that “God is (only) on our side.”

In order to illustrate this self-critical role, but also the constructive pedagogical task that it evokes within a particular tradition of faith, I endeavour to facilitate a dialogue between the atheist wager and the Reformed Christian heritage in which I was raised, paying special attention to the South African context that is most familiar to me. Nourished and shaped by the particularities of tradition and context, yet not bound by either, I hope that my reflections will point beyond their narrow scope to contribute to the broader reception of Kearney's atheist wager in other contexts and religious traditions.

As a dialogue between atheism and Reformed faith, the bulk of this contribution is a discussion of the basic tenets of the atheist wager, while continuously paying attention to how these resonate with Reformed faith and spirituality. The basic argument is that it is possible and even desirable to be Reformed and atheist. Both historical and theological positions are presented in favour of this proposal, while nevertheless raising important points of dissonance that challenge both the Reformed and atheist perspectives respectively. To mention only one example: atheism's hermeneutic of "the stranger" helps to recall that Calvin himself lived most of his life as a refugee and stranger. More than this, it helps to retrieve Calvin's call to hospitality as a call to recognise the sacred stranger, not as someone who is "the same as me," but in typically atheist fashion, as someone who, in their particularity and otherness, bears the image of God. This "recovery" subsequently serves to engage critically with the ambiguous history of Reformed Christianity in South Africa, which became horribly complicit with histories of colonial violence and an oppressive system of Apartheid, neither of which could add "hospitality to the stranger" to their résumé.

Throughout this dialogue some tentative suggestions are made on how Reformed churches may adopt and employ atheism as a constructive pedagogical tool that may help to empower and equip, motivate and inspire believers for a life of faith in so-called post-secular, pluralistic societies. Both atheism and the Reformed tradition share the Nuremberg Forum's emphasis on education, making it a very useful point of connection. On the one hand, the philosophical hermeneutical tradition that Kearney draws from has a rich pedagogical heritage, stretching from Schleiermacher and Dilthey to Gadamer, Betti and Ricoeur, each offering valuable insights on education, formation and transformation via the detour of engaging with the "otherness" of texts and persons. On the other hand, teaching, instruction and formation is not strange to the Reformed tradition either. Consider, for instance, John Calvin's understanding of the Triune God as Divine Teacher, employing various "external means" to shape and instruct persons and communities through the vicissitudes of human life, the guidance of Scripture, the inspiration of the Holy Spirit and the Church as mother and school of faith, hope and love.

The project, as outlined above, seems to be well aligned with the tradition of the Nuremberg Forums to "facilitate intercultural and interreligious dialogue and learning in a pluralistic society." Not only does it reflect a commitment to greater recognition, understanding and justice to "the Other," but seeks to do so by engaging with the educational resources available to our religious traditions. While insights will be gleaned from an engagement with a particular faith tradition, this will be done self-critically and seek from the outset to engage in an interreligious and intercultural exchange.

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### Utopias and Images

#### Contours of a religious formation of utopia

##### **1) What will be investigated?**

Religious education requires the understanding of which future is desirable (cf. Biehl, 467). How an ideal future life in this world could be is a question invoked by the terms “utopia” and “utopian”. This question concerns religious pedagogy as a scholarly discipline and in terms of its formation of theory. In its own way, it can be heard in the didactic principles and subject areas of religion and takes shape through concrete religious processes of upbringing and education. The issue touches on the personal history of the individual, the life of various communities and institutions, etc., and the life of the world community in general.

The unique character of a Christian utopia consists, in particular, of the historically inner ‘foretaste’ of the ultimate Kingdom of God (cf. Kehl, 175). Against the backdrop of the presence of utopia in the Judeo-Christian tradition, recent religious-pedagogical publications have suggested a stronger contemplation of the utopian perspective, in addition to the visualisation of the utopian dimensions of education and upbringing, the presence of utopia and dystopia in popular culture and the disclosure of the dangers and possibilities of the utopian vision. The need to pursue such a perspective in terms of religious didactics and make it fruitful for educational processes is emphasised by the estimation that there are too few utopias or idealised images of a local community and of the world which are shared by people and which could have a positive effect on their communal life and environment. In addition, the construction and utilisation of idealised images seem to be restricted to the individual person and their immediate surroundings. This religious-pedagogical confrontation with utopia is, in many respects, productive – insofar as it focusses on the possible and the still outstanding thus becoming a weapon against forgetting future and eternity; insofar as it sensitises to, and motivates towards, shaping the future; insofar as it not only orients development of the individual, but also bears the community and the world in mind.

Grappling with utopia has been recommended from a religious-pedagogical perspective and has been well received – whereby, however, the topic has in no way been made completely accessible. There is a need for further research in order to make the existing concepts of utopia fruitful for religious pedagogy; to consolidate,

differentiate, systematise and orient utopian perspectives within religious pedagogy; and to set criteria for navigating the confrontation with the inner-worldly future or the penultimate future in terms of Christian hope.

In particular, the observation that utopias – and expectations of the kingdom of God – densify as images of hope, future, or the world, and as guiding principles, and that dystopias take shape as nightmare scenarios, deserves attention from a religious-pedagogical perspective; indeed, this consideration could clarify the connection between image and utopia or dystopia in order to reveal the relationship of religious education, with the help of images. Precisely against the backdrop of the fact that utopias can be understood as “images of hope” and of the image character of the language of hope, “the” image comes into question as a hermeneutic key to make the issue of “utopia” (or dystopia) useful in a religious-pedagogical context. Images are indispensable if we are to speak of a reality beyond our realm of experience (cf. Nocke, 450). To what degree is the “image” suited to fathom and raise the religious-pedagogical potential of utopias and thus be productive in various religious-didactical subject areas and principles?

## **2) How should the topic of “Utopia and Image” be researched?**

In order to create an approach to a confrontation with the utopian perspective in the framework of religious education, an investigation of the existing concepts of utopia, the term “utopia” itself and the aspects, functions and questions connected to it is required. Reflections on images which can be used to illuminate “utopia” and productively analyse and exploit it in the context of religious education will be particularly sought out. Specific theological considerations will be analysed and worked through in order to keep the religious dimension of the topic in sight. The reflections of Friedrich-Wilhelm Marquardt appear to be particularly productive for this point. Marquardt differentiates between “thought utopia” and “image utopias” and references “image-thinking”, “images of happiness” and “images of healing”, as well as “images of the status quo and events”, in connection with “utopia”. The particular nature and different categorisation possibilities of utopia and image will be clarified and their relations to one another made transparent in order to open them up with regard to religious education.

## **3) For what purpose should the research results be used?**

The findings of this postdoctoral project can contribute profitably to various areas of religious pedagogy, especially in religious didactics and certain subject areas, precisely in light of the observation that attention is paid to what is verifiable, current, etc., however, the meaning of what is to come, what is possible, etc. does not always receive the attention which Christianity owes it. In this context, religious pedagogy also appears to be saturated with a worldly understanding of time which depends too little on what can still be hoped for and achieved in this world.

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### **Religious Education Disputes in Turkish Media during the Transition Process from Single Party System to Pluralist Democracy (1945-1960)**

#### **Introduction**

Along with the Republic Period after the collapse of the Ottoman Empire, came the law of unification of education (Tevhid-i Tedrisat Kanunu) on the 3rd of May 1924 as the biggest improvement in the field of education in Turkey. The 4th item in this law became the starting point of the disputes regarding the matter of religious education in the years to come. In 1933, religious education was completely left out of the general education in Turkey, as said item was interpreted differently in the frame of secularity. Nothing religious education took place in the school curricula until 1949. The year of 1949 marked the first implementation of religious education as an optional course, as the need for religious education was increasing and this caused problems in social life. This change of events was triggered 16 years later by the fact that multi-party system had become mandatory after the second World War. CHP (Republican People's Party) governed for many years as the single party in Turkey and neglected the needs of the people for religious education. Pluralist democracy brought along many novelties and freethinking in numerous areas, the right for religious education was no exception. As democratic thinking developed, people had the chance to raise their voice on their needs for religious education. Another trigger was the fact that religious education given by incompetent people in the years when religious education had not been governed by the state. Wrong religious thinking and implementation way to superstitions. This situation was seen as a threat by the state after some time.

In 1950, DP (Democratic Party) became the ruling party and implemented religious courses to primary school curricula in the same year, to teacher's training schools curricula three years later and to secondary school curricula six years later. Aside from these, religious vocational schools were opened in 1951 to raise competent personnel for religious education. For the graduates of said schools to be employed, high Islamic institutes were established in 1959. Tense disputes undoubtedly took place in the press organs and during the meetings of TBMM (Grand National Assembly of Turkey) which reflected in media. These disputes were shaped around matters such as the legitimacy and re-programming of religious education. In this paper, aspects of the disputes that were reflected in the media will be approached and whether or not information regarding other religions and cultures in the implemented religious education programs existed will be examined.

## **Research Purpose**

The legitimacy of religious education in Turkey and disputes such as to whom is said education given, how and where are still on-going. These disputes gained different dimensions due to today's cultural diversity and need of co-habitation.

Research purpose is to examine the disputes religious education, which had not been put into curricula for many years after the proclamation of the Turkish Republic, coming into the fore after the II. WW by using printed media sources. Thus this period of the Turkish education history will be elaborated by going further into the roots of religious education disputes that are still on-going today.

## **Research Method**

Historical research method was utilized in the paper. Printed media sources were scanned through first-hand for the media related portions. To reach these sources, written works and papers in the TBMM (GNAT) Library, Ankara Faculty of Theology Libraries and the periodicals archive of the national library were put into use. Also, books and papers related to the Turkish political history, religion-politics relation, educational history were approached with great care, so that the features of the period, in which aforementioned disputes took place, would be evaluated in a correct manner. Lastly, the data obtained from these sources were subjected to conceptual content analysis within the frame of deductive content analysis.

## **Results and Review**

After the Turkish war of independence, the Ottoman Empire was ended along with its all-around religious characteristic; State of the Republic of Turkey was founded in 1923. After the proclamation of the Republic, CHP governed the state for many years as the single party, and interpreted religion as a matter in need of from not only the state affairs within the frame of secularity but society as well, despite the fact that founders of the said party won the war of independence with religious references. Implementations were made with this interpret and educational institutions were affected the most. Religious education was gradually removed from educational institutions and kept out of the general education for many years. As one of the many educational needs of people left out of the general education, educational institutions could not carry out some of their duties. People tried to cater for their needs of religious education by themselves, this situation led to negative results. CHP, as the then single-party, felt themselves obliged to the people and re-approached the matter of religious education nother factor is the changes brought on by the multi-party system. As of 1946, regulations to be made on religious education were given extraattention. When we take a look at the state meetings n the then printed media regarding the content of said regulations, it can be seen that CHP could not reach a general agreement on the legitimacy of religious education. Indecisive steps taken by the state for religious education were hardly adopted by the people. Feeling distraught this situation, people decided to place DP (Democratic Party) at the helm. After coming into power with the claims of a better religious education, DP tackled this matter at first; however disputes on the subject did not cease to exist. After examining all the disputes via the of printed media sourcesthe following are the titles, in which said disputes were approached:

- Does religious education comply with secularity?
- Must religious education be mandatory?
- Should religious education courses have an effect on passing a course or not?
- Should religious education courses be governed by the state or private institutions?



-Does religious education comply with the freedom of conscience and the human right of freedom of religion?

-Is religious education an important factor in the growth of an individual?

After all theseations, one can clearly see that these disputes that had no scientific value gave the issue of religious education a rather secular dimension rather than , these long-lasting disputes acted as a barrier against any sort of novelties n the matter of religious education.

### **ABBREVIATIONS**

TBMM: Türkiye Büyük Millet Meclisi (Grand National Assembly of Turkey – GNAT)

CHP: Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi (Republican People’s Party)

DP: Demokrat Parti (Democratic Party)

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### **Negotiating Islam: A Case Study on Islamic Private Schooling in Austria**

#### **Introduction – Islamic Private Schooling in Austria**

During the last two decades, Islamic private schools<sup>1</sup> have been established in Austria in order to provide an Islamic education for Muslim children. Numbers of Islamic schools differ significantly between European countries. According to one comparative analysis of European countries with large Muslim communities, relatively few Islamic schools are recognized or supported by the state.<sup>2</sup> In addition, as Wan Daud states, “while there has been admirable commitment and enthusiasm among Muslims both in Muslim countries and in the West to establish Islamic schools and colleges, these are often not based on a strong theoretical foundation.”<sup>3</sup> Although there have been Islamic private schools in Austria for almost 20 years, no empirical research has yet focused on them. There is no quantitative or qualitative data available concerning the theoretical foundations of the schools, the backgrounds of pupils, parents or teachers or any other characteristics of Islamic schools.

According to the Islamic Schools Office, there are currently seven Islamic private schools in Austria.<sup>4</sup> Only a few of these are permanently acknowledged by the Austrian Board of Education and thus state funded.<sup>5</sup> According to the school statistics of the Austrian Federal Ministry for Education, Arts and Culture for 2006, private schools make up 14.6 per cent of all schools in Austria. Of the private schools, 35 per cent are denominational schools and 2.4 per cent are Islamic schools.<sup>6</sup> Islamic schools are therefore statistically not significant. However, Islamic schools are still of paramount importance for a number of Muslim parents. Moreover, the controversial debates over Islamic schools in the Austrian media underline the educational and societal significance of these schools.

In Austria, the establishment and operation of private schools are regulated by the Private School Act (Privatschulgesetz). All private schools that fulfill the conditions laid down by the Private School Act are granted public recognition (Öffentlichkeitsrecht), a status that gives them equal status with public schools. Moreover, private schools run by acknowledged religious communities are basically entitled to full governmental funding, a similar legal standing to that of the public schools. To gain recognition, the Islamic schools have first to be acknowledged by the IGGiÖ as genuine Islamic schools. They can then apply for public recognition from the Board of Education. After being awarded this status, they are

subsidized by the government. Conversely, they can be disqualified if requirements are not met. As has been said, the Islamic Schools Office is required to supervise both Islamic religious education and the Islamic schools.<sup>7</sup> A conversation with the inspector responsible for Islamic private schools suggests that the compartmentalization of Islamic schools is the consequence of a lack of cooperation and collaboration among Islamic private schools. The fact that there is no platform such as a Muslim Schools Association where questions may be raised, interests debated and best practice exchanged supports this view. Concomitantly, the profiles and identities of Islamic schools vary according to the national and cultural as well as Islamic backgrounds of the schools' founders, and also according to the dynamics of the heterogeneous Muslim groups within a particular school, which makes comparisons among Islamic schools even more difficult. Unlike in other European countries, such as the United Kingdom, there is no single-sex Islamic schooling in Austria.<sup>8</sup> There is less demand for Islamic schools, with or without governmental affiliation, in Austria than in the United Kingdom and the Netherlands, something that may itself be a consequence of the large-scale Islamic religious education that has been in place since 1982. It may be assumed that in recent decades Muslim communities and parents have felt that their religious needs were sufficiently met through Islamic religious education in the public school. Another factor could be the widespread and well-established mosque education available after school or at weekends. Parents often delegate the religious socialization of their children to such supplementary and privately organized Islamic religious education institutions as these, where the education normally mirrors the national identity and traditional customs of the parents' origins. An additional factor may be parents' fears that their children could be stigmatized in parts of the wider society, or be labelled as less educated and skilled or even as extremists or Islamists, after graduating from Islamic private schools. This could reduce their chances of establishing themselves in the labour market and complicate their participation in the wider society. Furthermore, pupils attending non-accredited Islamic schools in Austria have to take part in special exams (Externistenprüfung) at the end of each academic year in order to receive equivalent reports and certificates.<sup>9</sup> Thus, neither parents nor educators might see the necessity of establishing new Islamic schools. Moreover, both the foundation and the maintenance of Islamic schools are affected by such considerations as qualified staff, sufficient funding and fluctuations in pupil numbers, which might make the foundation of new Islamic schools challenging or unattractive.

### **Research Objectives**

This research aims to explore various understandings of Islamic education among the key stakeholders e.g. teachers, head teachers, parents as well as students. It further aims to critically investigate the influence of the Islamic ethos on the school culture in general. The research also aims to identify the positioning of the school and the key stakeholders among the wider secular multicultural Austrian society. To put it into a nutshell, the overall aim of the research is to increase and deepen the understanding and comprehension of the "Islamic" concepts leading Islamic private schools by eliciting the understanding and awareness of being "Islamic".

### **Research Questions**

On the basis portrayed above the research entitled "Negotiating Islam: A Case Study on Islamic Private Schooling in Austria" wants to answer following research questions:

1. What kind of understanding of an Islamic education is present among key stakeholders at Islamic private schools in Austria?
2. How does Islamic ethos influence the school culture? How is Islam put into practice?
3. How do Islamic schools see themselves as part of the wider secular multicultural society?

### **Research Methods**

In Order to deeply explore the formulated research questions an ethnographic research design has been applied. Since there is no single research conducted on Islamic private schooling in Austria an exploratory case study was designed which examines the practises of Islamic private schools in Austria. The “Islamic” self-image in theory and practice of Islamic private schools in Austria has been empirically investigated through participant observations in classroom, school life as well as on different occasions, interviews with key stakeholders has been conducted and finally document analysis has been undertaken, e.g. the homepage or other relevant school documents. Moreover, field notes as well as the researcher’s diary contain important data and were also analysed. The conducted data was analysed according the qualitative data analysis methods.

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### Religious Education as highly normative public theology

The term “public theology” (PT) encompasses two different meanings. On the one hand, the term describes theological issues highly relevant to society as a whole and not only on the individual or subcultural level (“societal PT”). Additionally, attributing certain issues to a “public theology, necessitates a selection of theological topics. On the other hand, “public theology” implies the communication of a whole range of theological issues in public contexts. From this perspective, “public theology” (PT) is a theology in and for the *agora*, not for personal reflection at home or in parishes (whether this terminology could be extended to synagogues, mosques etc would be a question open for discussion) and thus all theological topics are relevant in principle (“topical PT”). Here, religious institutions function as witnesses, or potential lobbyists, contributing their opinions to public discussions, yet remaining outside the parliament hall itself. While their claim to validity remains thus restricted, simultaneously and in line with Dietrich Bonhoeffer (and implicitly linking PT with Barth’s concept of ‘Christ as king’ postulated in Barmen in 1934), “public theology” is closely connected to the Church’s duty as a guardian (“Wächteramt”). Obviously, PT should then take on a decidedly critical position within society’s public discourse.

How then could PT as a project be linked with religious education (RE)? It seems rather obvious that PT intends specific communication processes that incorporate the relevance of religious traditions for society. Hence and particularly in the case of topical PT, communication of religious traditions occurs in places where socially relevant matters are discussed. Located in schools, RE is naturally part of an eminently public space and needs to be considered as PT. Yet, can RE function as a critical PT in school? And can RE as PT fit into the concept of PT without ruptures?

We can ascertain two antagonistic tendencies here. On the one hand, in discussions about reasons for RE in state schools (“öffentliche Schule”) scholars argue that interreligious learning can help pupils to deal with different world views and religions and fosters thus society’s cohesion. If RE is taken as PT, then PT comes quite close to the former concept of religion as a *vinculum societatis*. On the other hand, there is a strong tendency to conceive RE as a critical opposition to society’s tendencies towards standardization (e.g. in emancipatory or therapeutic RE theory).

In the following I want to expand on the character of “public” and its intrinsic plurality and on the rather specifically educational school form of normativity that I want to address with the term “ongoing canonization”.

1. In the discussions about interreligious learning – including those at the Nuremberg forum – the prevalent understanding of culture positions interreligious learning as learning about various religious cultures, systematically neglecting the inner diversity of the respective religious cultures. According to Wolfgang Welsch, such a concept of (religious) cultures must be understood as globular and self-contained. Perhaps we need to ask then in how far the PT’s concept of public is equally prone to, or even applies, such an essentializing notion of self-contained unity. If we want to understand the inner plurality of cultures, we need to apprehend groups (family, parishes, political parties) as independent micro-cultures which then form greater units, such as a political culture or Protestantism. Obviously, people belong to a variety of cultures: a family culture, a local school’s class culture, a religious community, a nation’s culture, each one with its own specific group-dynamic processes and memories.

This ongoing process of exchange (in so far as traditions are concerned) and overlap between these micro- and macro-cultures happens on an individual and on a media level in the sense of an exchange between collective and individual cultural memories (Jan Assmann). This cultural memory, encompassing the collective memory of a group, is inscribed in the individual bonding memory. If we use this approach for PT, then specific theological views – e.g. elements of the collective memory of the Church or of the German Buddhist Union etc – can be inscribed into the collective societal memory in order to render theological issues relevant for the whole of society.

What does this imply for RE? As RE offers the whole range of theology’s topics in an age-appropriate form, it must be subsumed under topical PT. RE’s self-image as a dialogical offer for pupils (even in the traditional “ministry for schools”, “Dienst an der Schule”) aims at aligning the, in some cases strong and exclusive, message of the Gospel with the neutral frame of state schools. Indubitably within this setting of a specific school class culture, the pupils’ individual familial religious imprints interchange with the cultural memories conveyed by the parish, the syllabus, or the school books etc.

Despite the ongoing discussion about appropriation (“Aneignung”) and mediation (“Vermittlung”), about emancipatory religious pedagogy or therapeutic RE, I suggest that RE in school offers a form of PT that insinuates highly obligatory contents, but really for school-specific reasons.

2. In the case of the educational frame for normativity, I want to draw on canon theory in literary studies. Just as a literary canon is always constituted by selecting and teaching certain works, RE also implies a further canonization not just of certain topics by choice, but of a certain way of dealing with the those topics as well (e.g. appropriation or mediation), as performative approaches have shown. What pupils consider religiously binding correlates with this ongoing canonization of (biblical) texts (in contrast to closed canonizations of the past), dogmatic topoi, or religio-cultural testimonies. Obviously, RE deals with a given canon as exemplified by

the holy texts, particular songs, and the like, which is further predetermined and canonized by syllabi and school books, thus communicating a core canon to society.

In conclusion, given the prevalence of RE in society, RE must not only be considered as a form of topical PT which resonates with a large section of society, but also contains the capacity for extremely normative societal repercussions.

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### **Religiously sensitive competence for dialogue**

Religious education at public schools currently has been getting under increasing pressure to legitimize itself primarily because of its denominational nature in Germany. At the same time interdenominationality and increasingly interreligiousness are not only relevant as a matter in religious education in schools, but are also structurally playing a role in the concept of religious education, like for example in the so called “Dialogischer Religionsunterricht für alle” in Hamburg. The current migration movement is going to increase the pressure on religious education in this regard.

In view of this the EDK-Denkschrift “Religiöse Orientierung gewinnen” labels the capability for plurality and dialogue as general educational objectives not only for religious education, but also for the whole school. The Denkschrift reveals how with the capability for plurality and dialogue religious education can become an impulse for a new school culture, because the school system needs to give all students the chance for religious orientation, to develop their own religious and ideological identity and to advocate for tolerant cohabitation in a democratically composed society.

Due to the increasing plurality of religions, ideologies and cultures, the importance of interreligious dialogue is emphasized. To take part in the interreligious dialogue, you need to have solid information. In relation to this Körtner diagnoses “religiöses Analphabetentum” which is implying an urgent need for religious education at schools for a peaceful living together: “Wie nun aber religiöse Bildung nicht allein als Aufgabe des Religionsunterrichts, sondern als Bildungsauftrag der Schule insgesamt zu sehen ist, so lassen sich auch die Fragestellungen öffentlicher Theologie innerhalb der Schule nicht auf den Religionsunterricht beschränken.“ This means that “religious instruction is not only an important locus of religion in the public sphere but also a locus (of learning) of Public Theology” and following this there needs to be interdisciplinary cooperation.

To start the capability for plurality and dialogue at schools the prospective teachers have to get adequately qualified. In my opinion this is not happening enough at present, not only within the theological teacher training. Considering those mentioned problem areas I see interreligious and a religiously sensitive competence for dialogue as a key quality not only for prospective religion and ethics teachers, but for all teachers. For those reasons I want to design a didactic concept for universities for developing and supporting interreligious and religiously sensitive competence for dialogue and at the same time test and evaluate it in practice. Thus when analyzing



concepts for interreligious learning it is conspicuous, that in the meantime many – in practice approved – concepts for school are present, but there are hardly any explicit for university.

In order to start my habilitation project, I first developed the following definition of religiously sensitive competence for dialogue for students in teacher training:

Religiously sensitive competence for dialogue is the capability, to take part in the dialogue amongst religions and ideologies in an understanding, competent, argumentatively, open minded, compassionate and mutually respectful way and at the same time look at one's own position through the other's perspective and thereby clarify and deepen self reflexively. The aim is to develop an appreciative attitude towards plurality.

To also theoretically base this model of religiously sensitive competence for dialogue on solid research, I looked for an adequate concept, which on the one hand consciously includes the capability for dialogue and on the other hand takes the emotional component of a dialogical encounter into adequate consideration, because in my opinion this dimension is missing out with those primarily cognitive aligned concepts of interreligious learning. The Comparative Theology seems to meet these outlined requirements, because its concept of hospitality also contains a dimension of relationship and aims for a real dialogue at eye level. Furthermore Comparative Theology intends to deepen the consciousness and understanding of one's own religion and faith especially by intensively dealing with foreign religions and theologies. As part of my habilitation project I want to use the impulses of the Comparative Theology as a basis for developing a competence orientated module of religiously sensitive dialogue.

Focusing on university didactics seems to make sense to me also from the perspective of research, because university didactics especially on the side of Protestant religious education is still "in its infancy", as the humorous headline of the latest GwR-Jahrestagung 2015 and thus is representing a gap in research. In this context Schröder even talks about "Ausbildungsschweigen' im religionspädagogischen Diskurs". My aim is therefore to break this silence and consistently align the development of such a module for university didactics with competence orientation.

At the same time another deficit can be removed, which is in fact to implement the competence orientation, which has been aimed for by the study reform and modularization, but hasn't been realized sufficiently. Thereby a competence orientation that was consistently thought through includes not only a new conception of seminars but also especially a new conception of study achievements. As defined by the constructive alignment even module exams have to be designed in a competence orientated manner. This is in fact to be done by forming a coherence between competences as Learning Outcomes, Teaching and Learning settings and exam formats. Furthermore the module religiously sensitive dialogue is to be evaluated to be able to test its effectiveness, because the empiric efficacy research is also still capable of development.

With this presented habilitation project not only current challenges in religious education at public schools are taken aboard, but even several existing research gaps are being dealt with.

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### Teaching with Broken Hope: Moral Injury and Public Schooling in the United States

#### Abstract

This is an exploration of the psycho-spiritual concept of moral injury (MI) in public school settings towards the development of a theology of education. The study is premised upon the fact that many teachers must enforce practices (standardized testing, suspension, expulsion, etc.) that data suggest are unlikely to help children in the long run. Consequently, many teachers go to work knowing that they will encounter circumstances that challenge their moral conscience, identity, and the values that got them into teaching in the first place. Through a Freirean engagement with pastoral theology and scholarship from education, religious education, and spirituality studies, I argue that MI ought to be included in (1) teacher training programs, (2) the ongoing support of teachers who find themselves in morally injurious contexts, and (3) the development of policy that impacts educational and pedagogical mandates.

#### Summary of Argument

The psycho-spiritual construct of “moral injury” was first developed to address circumstances emerging from military contexts. Drescher et al. (2008) articulate moral injury as “disruption in an individual’s confidence and expectations about one’s own or others’ motivation or capacity to behave in a just and ethical manner” and Silver (2011) refers to MI as “a deep soul wound that pierces a person’s identity, sense of morality and relationship to society.” However, though Jonathan Shay initially framed the idea nearly two decades ago, there have only recently been attempts to explore other social dynamics in which the application of the concept seems apropos. It was not until the 2014 American Academy of Religion meeting of the Moral Injury Working Group that there was a focused effort to highlight scholarship engaging analysis in non-military contexts. That year there was exploration of the utility of MI in analysis of societal racism, immigration, and prison systems. Following this trajectory, the Teaching with Broken Hope research is intended to explore the theological and policy implications of an application of MI analysis in U.S. public schools.

Under common pedagogical requirement in the U.S. many teachers are forced into contexts in which the formal supports and mandated means of education place them in situations where they are compelled to make decisions that they think are likely not to help children in the long term. I explore two such situations: (1) mandated punitive disciplinary actions like expulsion and suspension and (2) the use of high-stakes standardized testing. For example, there is a significant body of research that suggests that expelling children has a profoundly deleterious effect on their chances of academic success and perception of self (eg Scelso, 2013; Kupchik & Catlaw, 2015). In spite of this, teachers who work in schools with “zero tolerance” policies may well have to expel students to comply with school strictures. Thus, teachers often find themselves bound between their own personal commitments to serve children and their need to follow organizational mandates. As a result of these converging vectors sometimes this binding produces intense psychological tension and fracture: on a regular basis, many teachers go to work knowing that they will encounter circumstances that challenge their moral conscience, identity, and the values that got them into teaching in the first place. There are – in short – instances of moral injury which regularly occur in classrooms.

Using John Hull’s articulation of the topic, this research is part of the development of a “theology of education” (Hull 1984). It is not a theology of education in the polemic sense of advocating for religiously confessional content in the curriculum, prayer in school, or the teaching of intelligent design, etc., but an inquiry into (1) how particular practices within public education may have an effect on the psycho-spiritual development of youth and the vocational lives of their teachers, and (2) why people of faith may have an investment in addressing current educational practices in public schooling. In this sense, this project is a form of what Elaine Graham and her colleagues call “theology--in--action,” a public theology that reflects on the ways in which religion can interrogate questions of economics, politics, law, and justice, doing so from a theological perspective, especially as done with the intent to critique and offer constructive recommendations (Graham, et al., 2005).

In particular, Paulo Freire’s sense of education as a political and moral practice is considered, prompting the question: What is the spiritual and moral impact of enforcing educative practices even when the teachers enforcing them feel conflicted about their merit? Can the religious convictions of people of faith inform their thoughts on mandated pedagogical practices in the public sphere without coming into conflict with legal requirements for the separation of church and state? Little work has been done in this regard. For example, the utility of MI literature in education is beginning to be explored by Lauren Porosoff of The Teaching Tolerance initiative at The Southern Poverty Law Center (2015). She has done initial exploration of the power and transformative healing that can emerge when school dynamics can be revealed as morally injurious. Porosoff has developed an instrument to be used in classrooms with teachers to help them think through the ways in which they may be under strain that they have not yet come to recognize consciously, but her research has neither received much attention nor been the site of any documented theological reflection.

Drawing on current MI research, and interviews with Porosoff and other educators, the case is made that beyond reflection on the need for moral injury to be content in courses engaging religious education and theological reflection, the construct of moral injury ought to be included in (1) teacher training programs, (2) the ongoing support of teachers who find themselves in morally injurious contexts, and (3) the development of policy that impacts educational and pedagogical mandates.

This case is made with particular encouragement to faith communities, but also more broadly to the publics in which those communities are embedded.

### Description of Methodology

This project begins with an overview of the development of the Moral Injury construct, including its origins and some of the rationale behind the expansion of the construct to consider contexts beyond the military. There is then an exploration of the literature surrounding two educational contexts in which MI may be applicable: (1) mandated punitive disciplinary actions like expulsion and suspension and (2) the use of high-stakes standardized testing. Extant literature will be supplemented with interviews of educators aimed at exploring the ways in which educational practices might contribute to stress, spiritual distress, and/or moral anxiety. The text then moves to a prescriptive mood, suggesting ways in which normative theological positions held by Christians ought to catalyze reflection and action regarding current educational practices in public schools.

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### **Public Religious Pedagogy – a Challenge for the Protestant Educational Discourse in a Systematic Perspective**

When churches or religious communities appear in public, many of their actions have an educational component. On the other hand there are a lot of educational challenges which arise from the demands of a public theology. In our western, secular and differentiated civil societies, theology appears as public theology in a public discourse together with other actors. Its aim is to discuss in this public sphere pressing questions of the common good and the future of society. This public sphere of democratic discussion is as much a result of new arising democratic movements as these movements demand a public space to exist and to develop. Focussing on the educational dimension of these issues is the special interest of my research project.

#### **Chapter I Starting Point: Transformation Processes of the Public Sphere; Secularization of Societies and the Role of Religion; Public Theology as a Contribution to the Common Good**

During an ongoing process of modernization a historic transformation process of western societies (as well as in global contexts) took place within the last decades. In particular there are certain forms of secularization of society that subsequently lead to far-reaching changes in the shape and practice of religion. This comprises the meaning of religion in a pluralistic, differentiated society, its perception by society, as well as transmission processes to the following generations, when it is no longer part of socialization or common rituals but a matter of education.

Besides these developments various doubts about the success of the „project of the modern age“ exist, and the German philosopher Jürgen Habermas amongst others shares the opinion that religion with its mankind-old ritualized experience could be an indispensable resource of meaning and community-building values.

The central questions that concern the society as a whole are the quests for justice and common good, but also for possibilities of a good and meaningful individual life in an always more market-shaped society.

These challenges contain pressing educational duties which churches rarely attend in their traditional educational work – mainly because they do not consider these

duties as educational ones in an internal-ecclesiastical perspective. Most of these educational duties reach their goal in the public sphere. Based on the concept of "public theology" the newly developed concept to deal with these quests is called "public religious pedagogy".

The first chapter will define the field of investigation and explain the concepts used for the following considerations.

## **Chapter II Education in the Perspective of Public Theology – Systematic-theological Fundamentals**

The second part treats the systematic-theological fundamentals of the terms and concepts of "public", "religion", and "education". The public religious pedagogy can be understood as localized in the intersection of these three realms.

### **1. The Context: the Public Realm**

Public theology is always contextual theology. Therefore, it is necessary to define and describe the transformation processes of the public sphere referring to the works of Habermas and subsequently to further theological contributions by Wolfgang Huber and Heinrich Bedford-Strohm.

### **2. Public Theology, Religion, Civil Religion**

Whereas in some discourses of modern society religion is considered as something private, it always had an inherent public dimension. From its beginning religion and religious convictions wanted to influence and shape the world. In modern differentiated societies these intentions are embodied by the creation of and the contribution to discourses of various kinds and in various fields (policy, state, economy, sciences ...). To promote the common good is an important driver of action in public theology. Thus, many educational duties arise from these aims.

### **3. Education/ Public Religious Pedagogy**

Concepts of "education" used by public religious pedagogy (PRP) include the concept of „education“ in the broader sense of the German term "Bildung". It is necessary to have a closer look at the topics where public theologians yet see and describe educational aims and to work out the still existing blank gaps.

## **Chapter III Requirements for a Public Religious Pedagogy**

The main part of this chapter assembles and discusses a systematical presentation of the aims of education ("Bildung") in the perspective of a PRP.

The main theses of this chapter are:

- PRP is based on dialogue to allow complementary learning processes
- PRP is based on the capacity to deal with plurality and to express the own

voice in a way that others are able to understand it.

- PRP is contextual as it is grounded in historic times and geographic places, in the real life of a specific society. Furthermore, it is contextual as it needs the scientific interdisciplinary discourse.
- PRP is aligned to individual well-being and supports educational processes that enable people to strengthen their capability to live a good and meaningful life as a kind of „art of living“ (i.e. diaconal dimension).
- PRP is based on a strong link between education and justice: it is geared to the common good, encouraging education for a just society and against the unbounded forces of market-economy (i.e. prophetic dimension).
- PRP needs translation between religious and secular languages, between the languages of different scientific realms and encourages translational capabilities.

#### **Chapter IV Aspects and Practical Dimensions of PRP**

Obviously, religious education at public schools and the special challenges of secular societies are of peculiar importance for PRP and this research. This also applies to confirmation and youth work. Media change the structure of the public sphere: They extend the borders of the public sphere and, however, promote their fragmentation and the enlargement of the knowledge gap in the society. What capabilities do we need for the future to handle this? There is a lot of educational work done with adults in distinct areas to withstand the growing complexity of life. Educational Work is also needed to ensure that social movements and the civil society are democratically involved. Furthermore there are religion oriented community works as well as examples of complementary interreligious, intercultural, pluralistic learning. Even the cultural work of the church can be seen in an educational dimension and the perspective of PRP. And it must not be forgotten that PRP is a field of participation in the area of educational policy as well. This list is only exemplary and shows the clear practical significance of these considerations.